A Brief History of Gaming

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Written by THE EDGE1970 and Pandy Yato

For many of us in the gaming community, the love of gaming started young.

My first console and memories of gaming were of the SNES, the game that grabbed me the most was *Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* and I would spend hours immersed in a vibrant world of heroes and magic, a world that would help to forge my love of all things fantasy and influence the future games I would play.

The graphics weren't as realistic as they are today but that didn't matter, the stories are what enthralled us, we all wanted to be the heroes on screen, save the Princess (even if she was in another castle) and defeat the monsters, those games became; and for many of us, still are, our lifelong passions.

I was curious about what earlier gaming was like. I had never played, for example, the *Atari,* but there were others who had, Ambassadors who had grown up with the beginning of home consoles and seen it go from the early days of *Pong* to the release of the current consoles.

Thankfully **TheEdge1970** is always up for a chat, so we sat down to talk about history of gaming and his perspectives!

So Edge, tell us everything (preferably in under 5 hours 😊):

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“I used to go to an arcade in Scotland that was 10 minutes away from my school, so every lunch time we used to run down there and I would play *Galaxians* or *Donkey Kong,* but I hated *Pac-Man* as I couldn’t beat it, so I’d watch the older gamers playing it and try and learn the way to beat it so we would end up missing the end of lunch time and bunking afternoon lessons.

The first home console I had, and the first computer I built, was a *ZX Sinclair 80*. The games like *Manic Miner* were incredibly basic, came on cassettes and were more about inputting codes or dialogues to control stickman-like figures and were made by companies like *Ocean Software*, who were the people making the games we saw in the arcades.

Manic Miner (1983) – ZX Sinclair 80

Through a friendship with our Dads, a kid from school and I began going to each other's houses because we both had the *Dragon 32*, which came out August 1982 and we got this console because it offered more expansion options- you could load the games from cassettes (which could hold up to 20 minutes) or you could pay a premium and buy the game on a cartridge with instant loading, something which a lot of us associate with the *Nintendo 64* but actually was present in gaming a lot earlier.

The Dragon 32 also allowed you to connect a floppy disc drive, printers, and memory expansions enabling you to do many more things with it but also began to pave the way for the home computers we see today, the near instant loading times we have come to appreciate, and highlighted just how versatile a computer a home computer could be.

I grew up surrounded by technology, I was always around the latest thing being built because of my father's work in electronics, so after the Dragon 32 we upgraded to an *Amiga 500*, which was just before the gaming boom that was created by the *Sega Master System* (1985) and the *Nintendo Entertainment System* (1983).

The Amiga 500 had a built-in floppy drive, a faster processor, more memory ports and as things started to become more compact, the technology inside them was getting smaller, so parts you usually had to attach on the outside were now inside. These consoles were getting more powerful and had far more accessories, like joysticks or a mouse, that you could use with them, all of which was exciting to a young me.

The Secret of Monkey Island (1990)- Amiga 500

The Amiga 500 lead to the *Sega* consoles and I had all of them, grabbing them enthusiastically as soon as they came out. Games that really stood out for me were games like *Sega Rally* (Sega Saturn) which also introduced games being released on compact discs, which was the latest and greatest technology and started to shape consoles closer to the ones we see today and even saw companies like Nintendo eventually switch from cartridges to their version with mini discs on the *Game Cube*.

After its release in 1994, the *Playstation* grew a quick fanbase as this also heralded a sudden increase in games being made as, suddenly, they could get more information on discs. So new developers were arriving and could build the games they wanted, such as *Tomb Raider* or *Grand Turismo* that were ground-breaking for their graphics and the 3D worlds they created.

The gaming community back then was very torn between Nintendo and Sony because of the consoles they made. But other companies did try to also

compete- we also had the Panasonic created console called the *3DO*, which featured neither a region lock or a copy protection, enabling many to use home brew games.

Demolition Man (1994)- Panasonic 3DO

When Panasonic decided to enter the console market, they were already facing tough competition from their main competitor Sony and the 3DO was not the commercial success they hoped it would be, but a later joint agreement with *Microsoft* saw new and exciting developments in *DirectX*.

This agreement and all the DirectX technology coming from Panasonic saw Microsoft able to create easier ways for developers to integrate and stream video, audio and 3D animations. This paved the way for innovative next generation media tools that would impact future gaming and home consoles, with DirectX eventually being used as the basis for the *Xbox* consoles API, leading to Microsoft's entry into the console market.

This entry saw things changing rapidly within the gaming community, with the technology moving just as quickly and each generation of console being a result of how refined the technology had become due to these companies

wanting to create the best gaming machines. Each new generation was ground-breaking in its own right.

Final Fantasy XIII (2009)- Xbox 360

Multiplayer and online gaming became more prevalent in homes, the graphics and games we could play became better with each new console released and the boundaries of gaming are constantly changing with home gaming now accessible to all and at an affordable price.

The current generation of gaming illustrates how far gaming has truly come: we now have these incredibly powerful machines, with technology that is constantly evolving and improving, giving us all the kind of games and visuals I could only dream of as a kid. This generation of gamers are incredibly lucky to be growing up in an environment of gaming innovation and faster loading times."

Listening to Edge speak, I have learned so much and have also come to realize that the history of gaming is far more extensive than Edge and I have been able to cover here. There are many more companies, technologies and consoles created that laid the ground work for what we see today.

This past has helped impact our experiences today and brought us all together in the communities we love. It has given us worlds we can only dream of and, for gamers like Edge and myself, this constantly changing gaming landscape is exciting and also makes us more appreciative of what

we have now- of the games we could never have played as children and of how inclusive the gaming world has become.

Assassins Creed Valhalla (2020)- Xbox One/Xbox Series X/S

Gaming has changed many of our lives, mine included and I am so excited to see what future consoles we will have, what leaps in technology we will see and the future games I have yet to play, I encourage you all to learn more about the gaming world & the rich and vibrant history it has.

If you are reading this and are not an Ambassador and would like to come chat about games with us as well as make some new friends along the way, then kindly check us out here!

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